

Dark Sweet Cherry Varieties

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Early

Cavalier - Early season; fruit medium, good flavor, below average yields, firm, with moderate crack resistance; ripening somewhat uneven; good hardiness; moderate vigor. Comments: Good variety for the early season fresh market, but yield too low to plant for processing.

Merchant - Early; Origin - United Kingdom; fruit size medium (fairly large for season); good quality fruit; hangs well on tree; picks with dry stem scar; cracks quite badly; vigorous, health tree. Comments: Worthy of trial as early fresh market cherry, but cracking may be too severe.

Vista - Early; Ontario selection; good quality fruit for the season; very crack susceptible. Comment: Too susceptible to cracking to plant for anything but possibly to have a few early season fresh cherries for local markets.

Viva - Early (1 day after Vista in Ontario); Ontario selection; good flavor; firmness fair; medium size; shy bearing (does not cluster); moderately crack resistant (far superior to Vista in the same season). Comments: Niche is early season fresh market. Fruit size, firmness and yield are poorer than Vista, but cracking is so much less that I think Viva is the preferred cherry at this time. Processes well, but too shy bearing to generally recommend for processing.

Early-Mid

Hartland (NY3308) - Early mid-season; Windsor open pollinated; Windsor open pollinated; NY selection bears early and heavy; fruit of good quality, but not very large and cracking has been a problem; young trees only moderately hardy, but older trees doing well; pollen compatibility group VI (with Gold). Comment: Cracking is too serious of a problem for planting significant acreages.

Valera - Early mid-season; Ontario selection; fruit medium sized, good quality; consistently good crop though it does not bear in heavy clusters; moderate cracking. Comments: Doesn't have the size the fresh market wants, but may have a niche in processing. When compared to Ulster, it has appeared to have slightly better yields, slightly less cracking and less firmness. Still, cracking is not as good as one would like for processing.

Vicount -- Early-mid season. Ontario selection; medium large, good flavor and quality; moderate to heavy cracking when young but is looking better with age (Gus Tehrani indicates good crack resistance); do not plant on Mahaleb; has shown a tendency at NWMHRS to bear very heavy followed by moderate crop.

Mid

Bing - Mid-season. Nice quality fruit; good trees; fair yield; cracks badly. Comments: Cracks too much to plant in Michigan.

Vandalay (V690618) - Van x Stella. Self-fruitful. Newly named selection from Vineland, Ontario. As with Tehranivee, nice cherry and very productive but cracking has been a significant problem; therefore not recommended for Michigan.

Kristin - Mid-season; New York variety; fruit are moderately large, firm, excellent flavor, NY indicates good crack resistance though our experience would rate it as moderate crack resistance; trees are very hardy (has performed well in Montana and Norway); has yielded well here though warmer climates report it is slow to bear and yields only moderately. Comments: Show promise for both processing and fresh market, and worthy of trial plantings, particularly in areas of Michigan with less than ideal sweet cherry sites.

Ulster - Mid-season; fruit is medium large, good quality, but with moderate cracking susceptibility; bears well; hardy tree; pollen compatibility group III. Comment: Nice variety for fresh and processing when it doesn't crack. Cracking on young trees has been worse than expected. As trees planted mature, the cracking is reduced. Doing very well on Gisela 6 (148-1) rootstock at NWMHRS

Sam - Mid-season (though usually harvested as early season); B.C. selection; fruit is moderately large, black, relatively poor flavor, very crack resistant; fruit hangs on the tree well; trees are quite hardy and fairly resistant to bacterial canker; good productivity; fruit bears in clusters that favor brown rot; pollen compatibility group VIII (with Schmidt). Comments: Sam does particularly well in northwest Michigan on Mahaleb rootstock (where soils allow). While flavor is a problem for some fresh markets, considering all factors, this remains a good choice for processing. Harvesting in mid-season for fresh instead of early season improves flavor.

Sylvia - Very large, firm cherries; trees are dying - apparently due to winter injury; cracking is quite severe in first three years of cropping. Not recommended for planting.

Summit - Mid-season; fruits very large, firm reddish mahogany color at maturity; heart shaped (exceptionally pointed), moderately susceptible to cracking (lost crops in '92 and '93 on young trees with light crops to cracking, but cracking has been fairly light since cropping has been heavy); not precocious but fruit set improves with age; tree hardiness suspect. The first trees planted at NWMHRS were on Mahaleb and died prior to cropping, the next were planted on Mazzard and trees look excellent - came through '93-94 and '95-96 winter with no tree problems. Vigorous, upright trees. Comments: Suggest limited trials for fresh production; may be too large and too susceptible to cracking to grow for processing. This variety has had the largest fruit at the NWMHRS for the past three seasons. It is getting good reviews in Europe.

Tehranivee (V690620) - Van x Stella. Self-fruitful. Mid-season. Newly named selection from Vineland, Ontario. Cracking has been very severe on this, otherwise nice quality cherry. Not recommended for Michigan due to cracking.

Stella - Mid-season. Comments: This was the first named self-fruitful variety. It cracks readily and sets fruit and ripens over a period of time, therefore, this variety is not recommended for commercial planting in Michigan but other self-fruitful varieties are following that show promise.

Nelson - Mid-season; old selection from Northport, Michigan; fruit is good quality (similar to Schmidt), very crack resistant (lowest of any dark cultivar on Station); less problems with bacterial canker than Schmidt; pollen compatibility group unknown (not VI). Comments: No source of virus free budwood is available, so trees are hard to get and do not get off to the good start that we expect from virus-free trees. Trees are in the process of being cleaned up for virus. Deserves continued planting for fresh and process once virus free trees are available.

Schmidt - Mid-season; fruit good quality; very good crack resistance; tree decline is a problem; productivity is also a problem. Comments: Have not recommended in new plantings for many years due to problems, but fruit quality is good enough to try this old variety on some of the new rootstocks.

Royalton (NY11390) - Mid-season; exceptionally large fruit; high quality fruit; slow to come into production; yield may be a problem; upright vigorous growth; trees are not surviving well even on exceptionally good sites, blooms early season; pollination Group VIII (with Schmidt). Comments: I am not optimistic about this variety due mainly to winter injury problems. If planted, may want to try on rootstocks other than Mazzard to help offset the delayed bearing trait. Good fresh potential if trees would survive; too large and shy bearing for processing, has shown moderate cracking on young trees at NWMHRS but reported to have moderately good crack resistance.

Van - Late mid-season; fruit is medium large, good quality, shiny, reddish black, very firm, quite susceptible to cracking; very hardy tree; very heavy yields; pollen compatibility group is II. Comments: Cracking is too serious to recommend planting this otherwise nice variety.

Windsor - Late mid-season; hardy tree; heavy yield; poor quality fruit. Comments: This old variety no longer has a market niche in processing or fresh, therefore not suggested for planting.

Late

Somerset (NY6476) - Late season; Van x Vic; NY selection; fruit are medium-large, reddish purple and very firm; pollen compatibility group III - with Napoleon and Emperor Francis; blooms early season; cracking appears to be a major problem at least while trees are young, though cherry breeder, Bob Anderson, in New York indicates "surprisingly crack resistant" for such "exceptionally firm" fruit. Comments: Wonderful late season fresh market cherry, but cracking has been too severe to recommend planting. Should also process well, but considered too crack susceptible to recommend planting for processing.

Hedelfingen - Late season; fruit is medium to medium large, good quality, not very firm (especially when mechanically harvested), with fair to good crack resistance (above average); very productive; hardy tree; pollen compatibility group VII. Comments: Remains an important processing variety due to good cropping on a strong, hardy tree, though soft fruit is a concern. Fresh limited mainly to local sales.

Sunburst - Late. Sounds good in reports with exceptionally large fruit size but both trees died prior to fruiting at the NWMHRS (prior to the hard winter of '93-94). Comment: Based on this, it is not recommended for large scale planting in Michigan. Trial only on superior sites.

Lapins - Popular new variety from British Columbia; late season; fruit are reported to be large and of high quality; at NWMHRS one tree is dead and other in very poor condition; upright, self-fruitful. Comments: Proceed with caution on this variety due to apparent lack of hardiness; if tried, put on excellent sweet cherry site only.

Vic - Late (with Windsor); Vineland, Ontario release; medium size fruit; yield moderate at NWMHRS, though reported as heavy in Ontario; appears to have good crack resistance; good quality for processing; tree appears to be hardy. Comments: This variety could be planted for processing, but not recommended for fresh.

Attika(Kordia) - From Czechoslovakia (first good look at fruit in NW Michigan in 1998); fruit are large, firm, very good quality, late, exceptionally elongated pit, cracking may be a problem. Comments: This cherry is getting excellent reviews in Europe as a fresh market cherry. It is worth

trying in limited plantings for the fresh market. Trees planted in 1994 survived the '95-96 winter with no visible problems. Cracking was quite bad in '98 on first crop. Fruit are attached quite firmly to stem. Football shaped pit is expected to be a problem for processing; therefore not recommended at this time to plant for processing.

Very Late

Regina - From York, Germany. Not yet fruiting at the NWMHRS. Reported to be very late, good quality, highly crack resistant. Was developed in an area with high bacterial canker pressure, so should have good bacterial canker tolerance. Worthy of grower trials based on European experience, but will know much more in the next 2-3 years as first fruiting is expected at NWMHRS in 1999.

Sweetheart (135-22-8) - Very late (slightly ahead of Hudson); Van cross from Summerland, B.C.; productive, medium to large fruit, moderate cracking, very good firmness and good flavor. Only one of the two trees has survived. One died very young, and the surviving tree is doing well. Tree survival also reported poor from northern Germany where bacterial canker is a serious problem. As with Lapins, trial plantings should only be made on excellent sites, but may have a niche for late season local sales (though cracking is a problem).

Hudson - Very late (5-7 days after Hedelfingen); NY selection; fruit fairly large, firm, good flavor, fairly good crack resistance; tree is large, hardy, slow to come into bearing on Mazzard, moderately productive (though cropping better with age); blooms late, pollen compatibility group IX (with Rainier). Maturity was not uniform in 1996. Comments: Too late for processing (ripens with Montmorency), but has potential for the late fresh market. Dwarfing rootstock may overcome production problems in early years.

Please send any comments or suggestions regarding this site to:

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